

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as shown below:

5

1. (Currently amended) A method for a pre-treatment of chips, comprising:

exposing the chips to an acidic treatment device by adding an acidic treatment fluid to establish an acidic slurry having a 10 fluid fraction exceeding 50%;

draining an acidic fluid from the chips ~~from the acidic slurry~~ so that the drained chips obtain a remaining free acidic fluid fraction surrounding the chips that does not exceed 10% by volume excluding any chip moisture disposed inside the chips;

15 heating the drained acidic slurry fluid to a temperature in a temperature range of exceeding 20-80° C;

recycling the drained acidic slurry fluid directly to the acidic treatment device without adding or removing substances from the drained acidic fluid;

20 adding additional acidic treatment fluid to the acidic treatment device only in a replacement amount that corresponds to an amount of acidic fluid that is retained in the drained chips;

heating the drained chips by steam to a first temperature; and 25 heating the drained chips to a second temperature not exceeding 140° C while adding an alkali impregnation liquid, the second temperature being higher than the first temperature.

30 2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the heating of the chips essentially takes place by an addition of warm alkali impregnation fluid.

3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2 wherein the addition of the warm alkali impregnation fluid takes place in a vessel in which a flow of alkali impregnation fluid is formed in the vessel that flows in an opposite

5 direction to a flow of the chips.

4. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the heating of the chips takes place through an addition of steam to the chips in at least one step, after

10 which the chips that have been heated with steam are formed into a slurry with the alkali impregnation fluid.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1

wherein the acidic treatment fluid has a pH that does not

15 exceed 4-5 and the acidic treatment fluid is added to a treatment vessel in an amount for replacement that corresponds to an amount that accompanies the chips to a subsequent heating by steam.

20 6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5

wherein no continuous withdrawal of acidic treatment fluid takes place from the treatment vessel in excess of a loss of acidic treatment fluid that accompanies the chips.

25 7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1

wherein the alkali impregnation fluid is constituted by a sulphide-rich liquor.

8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 7

30 wherein the alkali impregnation fluid is constituted by a mixture of at least one of sulphide-rich white liquor, sulphide-rich black liquor and/or sulphide-rich green liquor, and where the alkali impregnation fluid has a molarity of  $\text{HS}^-$  that exceeds 0.15 mol/liter.

9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 8 wherein the alkali impregnation fluid has a molarity of NaOH that does not exceed 0.75 mol/liter.

5 10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein a formation of a slurry of the chips in the acidic treatment fluid takes place during a period of 1-20 minutes.

10 11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 10 wherein the acidic treatment fluid in a vessel is subject to an external flow against a heat exchanger.

15 12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the chips are heated with steam in at least one step to a temperature in a range of 80-120 °C.